



## Archived Information

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



# HELPING SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS RECOVER

August 24, 2006

*"The New Orleans school system...has undergone a complete overhaul since the hurricane raked the city and flooded two-thirds of its 128 public schools."*

-- Time Magazine (Aug. 17, 2006)

*"I think anyone who has an interest in public education, no matter where they may be on any particular issue, will watch, because there is something for everybody in what we're doing."*

-- Scott S. Cowen, Education Committee Chair, Bring New Orleans Back Commission (ibid.)

*"This is going to be a wonderful, wonderful school year. We're going to make these kids the smartest kids in the world."*

-- Mary Hynes-Smith, principal, Mary McLeod Bethune Elementary School, New Orleans (ibid.)

One year after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita ravaged the Gulf Coast region, the education system is making remarkable progress towards recovery. More than 1,100 public and private schools were closed two weeks following the storms. About 158,000 students were still displaced as of October 1, 2005.

Now, thanks in part to nearly \$2 billion in federal education support, students from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and elsewhere are receiving an education while their schools are being repaired, restocked, restaffed and reopened. Secretary Spellings is marking the upcoming one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina by outlining the Department of Education's continuing effort to help the Gulf Coast region's families and schools recover from this terrible natural disaster.

## THE RECOVERY TO DATE

The Gulf Coast region States and their education systems are making great progress towards recovery: <sup>1</sup>

- 100 percent of K-12 schools have reopened in Mississippi. <sup>2</sup>
- More than seven out of ten K-12 schools have reopened in Louisiana.
- About half the K-12 schools in New Orleans have reopened.
- All major institutions of higher education in the region have reopened.

## THE DEPARTMENT'S ROLE: EDUCATING DISPLACED STUDENTS

- \$880 million was provided under the Emergency Impact Aid for Displaced Students (Impact Aid) Program to assist local education agencies in 49 States and the District of Columbia in paying for the cost of educating more than 150,000 displaced students enrolled in public, non-public and charter schools.

<sup>1</sup> 2005-06 school year figures.

<sup>2</sup> On the school's original grounds or elsewhere.

For more information, visit [www.hurricanehelpforschools.gov](http://www.hurricanehelpforschools.gov).

- Using data from the Impact Aid applications, **\$5 million** was quickly released under the **Assistance for Homeless Youths (Homeless Aid) Program** to help State education agencies educate students left temporarily homeless by the storms.

## HELPING SCHOOLS REOPEN

- **\$750 million** was provided under the **Immediate Aid to Restart School Operations (Restart Aid) Program** to help repair, restock and reopen schools in the States most affected by the storms.
- A three-year **Charter School Grant worth nearly \$24 million** was provided under the No Child Left Behind Act to help Louisiana plan, design and create new charter schools, increasing the range of choices for affected families.

## AIDING HIGHER EDUCATION

- **\$200 million** has been allocated for institutions of higher education to help reopen schools and educate displaced students. Up to \$1,000 per student has been awarded to help defray new and unexpected costs resulting from the disaster.
- An additional **\$50 million** will be awarded under a new supplemental aid package signed by the President in June 2006.
- **\$28 million** in unused federal campus-based aid was reallocated to assist institutions of higher education affected by the storms.
- The Department offered borrowers in federal student loan programs who were impacted by the disaster **six months of student loan-payment forbearance**. In addition, the Department **capped interest rates and reduced loan fees** to Historically Black Colleges and Universities damaged by the storms.

## MANAGING ASSISTANCE FROM OVERSEAS

- Working with the U.S. Department of State, the Department of Education is helping to allocate **\$60 million in foreign donations** to the Gulf Coast region.
  - **\$30 million** will be awarded to **K-12 education**, the majority of funds going toward the reconstruction of libraries, science labs and other physical assets.
  - **\$30 million** will be awarded to **higher education**, largely for reconstruction.

## MATCHING DONATIONS WITH THOSE IN NEED

- The Department launched the **Hurricane Help for Schools** online clearinghouse ([www.hurricanehelpforschools.gov](http://www.hurricanehelpforschools.gov)) to match schools in need with willing donors. To date, **more than 886 matches** between donors and schools in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Texas have been made.
- More than **12,000 pieces of furniture and equipment** valued at **more than \$4.5 million**—including computers, printers, desks, chairs and bookcases—have been donated and delivered through the **Furniture for Schools Project**, a joint effort of the Department of Education and the General Services Administration.
- **250,000 books** have been distributed to schools, community libraries and homes through the **Gulf Coast Summer Reading Initiative**, a public-private effort between the Education Department and the nonprofit First Book organization.